

## Weekly Bible Study group – May 27, 2009

### *This week's text: James 4*

Reflection by Bob Zurinsky, SPU Center for Worship

In last week's reflection on James 3, I talked about how the first step toward living with "the wisdom from heaven" is to *stop pretending* – to take off the masks that we hide behind, and live with openness and honesty. When we're faking it, no matter what it is we're faking, our souls stop growing and loving because they are spending all their energy retreating and hiding.

This week we're looking at James 4. It's the next logical step in the process...in this chapter, James is really talking about lives that exhibit that same kind of wisdom. What does the "wise person" really look like? The answer in this chapter: humility.

In chapter 4, James breaks it down into three categories. The wise person is:

- **Humble before God** (4:4-10)
- **Humble before others** (4:1-3,11-12)
- **Humble about our own lives** (4:13-17)

In each of these categories, turmoil and chaos erupt in our lives when we think that we're entitled to something. When we think that we deserve to have things our own way, that we deserve to tell other people what to do, that we deserve to be in control of our own lives and destinies. This is the root of much of our pain and anxiety.

To grasp life with a sense of entitlement is to live exactly opposite of the Gospel. I know people who live like this (including myself a lot of the time). And I've noticed that those who believe that they should be served and should be in charge – those people end up pretty unsettled and unconnected. But the opposite is also true, *paradoxically* true: those who live honestly and freely and generously before God and others, those who live with open hands and no sense of entitlement...these people find themselves filled and loved, having all that they really need for their lives.

I want *that* life!